

Serial No.: 10/613,440
Title: SEATBELT AIRBAG
Response

In the claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A seat belt device for protecting the occupant of a vehicle comprising:
 - a tongue fitting having an eyelet formed therein, said tongue fitting adapted to be received by a seat belt buckle attached to said vehicle;
 - a seat belt retractor attached to said vehicle;
 - a seat belt comprising a flexible fabric tube having a first end attached to said vehicle, a second end attached to said seat belt retractor, and a medial portion passing through said eyelet formed in said tongue fitting, said seat belt forming a three point restraint including a lap portion extending from said ~~fixed~~ **first** end to said tongue fitting and a torso portion extending from said tongue ~~portion~~ **fitting** toward said seat belt retractor;
 - an inflatable air bag member disposed within said seat belt, said inflatable air bag member extending within said seat belt from a first end proximal said ~~fixed~~ **first end** of said ~~seat belt end~~ **flexible fabric tube** to a second end within said torso portion of said seat belt;
 - a reinforcing sleeve, said reinforcing sleeve comprising a flexible fabric sleeve having a closed end and an open end, said reinforcing sleeve forming an annular layer between said inflatable air bag member and said flexible fabric sleeve, said reinforcing

sleeve extending from said closed end proximal said first end of said ~~inflatable air bag~~
~~member~~ **flexible fabric tube** to said open end within said torso portion of said seat belt;
and

an inflator fluidly connected with said inflatable air bag member for providing a
source of pressurized gas for inflating said inflatable air bag member.

2. (Original) The seat belt device of claim 1, wherein:

said flexible fabric tube includes a longitudinal seam adapted to rupture as said inflatable
air bag member inflates.

3. (Currently Amended) The seat belt device of claim 1, wherein:

said reinforcing sleeve comprises a stress concentration at said open end, said stress
concentration being capable of initiating a tear in said reinforcing sleeve that propagates toward
said eyelet as said inflatable air bag **member** is inflated.

4. (Original) The seat belt device of claim 3, wherein:

said stress concentration comprises a notch cut into said reinforcing sleeve intersecting
said open end of said reinforcing sleeve.

5. (Original) The seat belt device of claim 1, wherein:

said reinforcing sleeve comprises a fabric having a denier of no greater than 1000 x 1000.

6. (Currently Amended) The seat belt device of claim 1, wherein:

said reinforcing sleeve comprises a fabric having a denier of no greater than 500 x **500**.

7. (Original) The seat belt device of claim 1, wherein:

said inflatable air bag member comprises a fabric tube that, in an un-inflated condition assumes the shape of a flat belt having a first and a second lateral edge, said fabric tube being folded into a rooster-tail fold comprising a plurality of pleats along said first lateral edge and a single apex along said second lateral edge.

8. (Currently Amended) A seat belt airbag comprising:

an inner layer comprising a an inflatable air bag member, said inflatable air bag member comprising a an elongate tubular member that, in an un-inflated condition assumes the shape of a flat belt having a first and a second lateral edge and a first and a second end, said elongate tubular member ~~tube~~ being folded into a rooster-tail fold comprising a plurality of pleats along said first lateral edge and a single apex along said second lateral edge, said inflatable air bag member being adapted to deploy under an inflation pressure;

a middle layer comprising a reinforcing sleeve surrounding said inflatable air bag member and extending from a first point proximal said first end of said inflatable air bag member to an open end at a point medial of said first and second ends of said inflatable air bag member, said middle layer comprising a flexible fabric tube having sufficient strength to contain said inflatable air bag member under said inflation pressure; and

an outer layer comprising a flexible fabric tube surrounding said inflatable air bag member and said reinforcing sleeve, said outer layer having a longitudinal weakened seam such

Serial No.: 10/613,440
Title: SEATBELT AIRBAG
Response

that said outer layer is incapable of containing said inflatable air bag member under said inflation pressure.

9. (Currently Amended) The seat belt device of claim 8, wherein:

said reinforcing sleeve comprises a stress concentration at said open end, said stress concentration being capable of initiating a tear in said reinforcing sleeve that propagates toward away from said eyelet open end as said inflatable air bag member is inflated.

10. (Original) The seat belt device of claim 9, wherein:

said stress concentration comprises a notch cut into said reinforcing sleeve intersecting said open end of said reinforcing sleeve.

11. (Original) The seat belt device of claim 8, wherein:

said reinforcing sleeve comprises a fabric having a denier of no greater than 1000 x 1000.

12. (Currently Amended) The seat belt device of claim 8, wherein:

said reinforcing sleeve comprises a fabric having a denier of no greater than 500 x 500.